AN

ELEGY.

BRITISH MUSEUM

AN

ELEGY,

(AFTER THE MANNER OF GRAY)

ON THE

DEATH

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM JACKSON, Esq.

OF

CANTERBURY,

Who departed this Life April 17, 1789, in the 32d Year of his Age.

EHEU! FUGACES—
LABUNTUR ANNI! NEC PIETAS MORAM,
- - - - - - - - - - - - - -
AFFERET INDOMITÆ MORTI.

HOR.

BY ROBERT NOYES.

CANTERBURY:

PRINTED BY J. GROVE, AT THE GENERAL PRINTING-OFFICE, HIGH-STREET,

AND SOLD BY W. BRISTOW, FLACKTON, MARRABLE AND CLARIS, AND SIMMONS AND KIRKBY,

AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS IN KENT.

BRITISH MUSEUM

LATELY PUBLISHED,

By W. BRISTOW, Bookſeller, CANTERBURY,

In QUARTO, Price 2s.

DISTRESS,

A POEM,

By *ROBERT NOYES*, CRANBROOK.

The Subject of this Poem is drawn from a Scene of Diſtreſs which the Author has lately experienced. The American War, and the Loſs of the Royal George, are likewiſe finely expreſſed.

The CRITICAL and ENGLISH REVIEWERS have ſpoken very favourable of this POEM, and earneſtly recommended it to the Peruſal of the Public.

ALSO,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

In OCTAVO, Price 3s. ſewed,

MISCELLANIES, IN VERSE AND PROSE;

Containing Characters, Eſſays, and Letters, on various Subjects.

TO

THE RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM JACKSON, Esq.

OF

CANTERBURY,

THE FOLLOWING POETICAL ESSAY

IS DEDICATED;

NOT AS AN OBLATION OF FLATTERY,

BUT AS A GRATEFUL

TRIBUTE OF TRUTH,

TO THE

PIETY, VIRTUE AND MENTAL ENDOWMENTS

OF AN AMIABLE CHARACTER;

AND

AS A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT

TO THE MEMORY

OF A DEPARTED FRIEND.

CRANBROOK,
November 20, 1789.

BY THE AUTHOR.

AN

ELEGY, &c.

DEEP in the covert of a beachen grove,
Where the Sun's ray at noon-tide ſcarce is ſeen;
Sacred to VIRTUE, FRIENDSHIP, TRUTH, and LOVE,
And all that makes the Vale of LIFE ſerene:

Once ſtood a hallow'd Fane, of antique frame,
Where their chaſte vows the holy Palmers paid;
Where for devotion weary Pilgrims came,
And where the aſhes of the Saints were laid.

Now moſs-begirt; with ivy creeping clad;
Beneath its ruin'd roof the Turtle wails;
Nought elſe is heard, ſave ſighings of the ſad,
Which gently murmur through the broken aiſles.

There, by MELPOMINE in ſilence led,
My Muſe diſtreſs'd, a calm retirement ſought;
Indulg'd by Night, a friendly tear to ſhed,
A ſigh to vent, and raiſe a mournful thought.

Juſt as the Curfew's diſtant ſound was loſt,
My feet the ſolitary pile had reach'd;
Where once the Devotees their boſoms croſs'd,
And bearded Sages lectures ſolemn preach'd.

Welcome! thrice welcome! hallow'd Fane, I cry'd!
Welcome! ye walls and roof with ivy bound!
Welcome! thrice welcome! Echo ſoft reply'd—
Penſive I ſtood and liſten'd to the ſound.

That voice, methinks, ſo greeting and ſo ſweet,
Iſſues from ſome bleſt vault or ſecret cell;
Where guardian Angels, kind to mortals, meet,
Or Souls (perchance) unbodied nightly dwell.

Oh! would ſome Spirit, who firm Friendſhip knew,
Inſpire my Muſe, and wake her plaintive ſong?
Point to whoſe Grave the tear unfeign'd is due;
To whom the Elegiac Lays belong!

Lo!

Lo!—or I dream—yon viſionary Shade
  Points to the ſod where dear ORESTES ſleeps;
While gloom and ſorrow all the dome pervade,
  And LOVE parental ſilent ſtands—and weeps.

"To his cold Grave," in whiſpers ſlow and few,
  The gentle Spirit ſpoke, and tun'd my ſong;
"To his cold Grave the tear unfeign'd is due,
  "And to his Name the ſtrains of Praiſe belong."

Inſtructed by *this Shade* whoſe Death to mourn;
  In faithful lines whoſe Virtues to rehearſe;
My humble Muſe, dejected and forlorn,
  The taſk attempts, tho' Critics ſcan the Verſe.

APOSTROPHE.

O! DEATH! dread Monarch of deſpotic ſway,
  Beneath whoſe ſceptre proudeſt Princes bend!
Thy ſtern commands Diſeaſes all obey,
  And royal duſt with duſt plebean blend!

Thine arm lays low the lofty laurel'd head,
And legions daily to thy proweſs yield;
CÆSARS and POMPIES by thy ſhafts have bled,
And all the leſſer Heroes of the field.

The village Curate, and the mitred Prieſt,
The hoary Monk, and Hermit of the cell;
Who gravely once thy ruthleſs reign confeſt,
Long ſince to thee have eaſy victims fell.

Where GALEN now, of ancient healing ſkill?
Where thoſe ſo famed, ÆSCULAPIUS born?—
Dire Death defy'd their apozem and pill,
And laugh'd their boaſted Recipes to ſcorn.

Thy ravages we trace amid the young,
Thoſe tender bloſſoms of a ſhort-liv'd day:
Like vernal flow'rs, by foſtering care they ſprung,
Blaſted by thee, like vernal flow'rs decay.

BEAUTY, whoſe charms a ſavage breaſt would ſpare,
From thine aſſault can no exemption plead;
If thy rough hand but *touch* the lovely fair,
Her bluſhing roſes and her lillies fade.

They who the paths of ſacred Wiſdom tread;
Who Learning's Treaſure ſtudiouſly explore;
How ſoon they mingle with the peaceful dead,
And all their Eloquence is heard no more!

Not PIETY itſelf, the ſafeſt ſhield
To guard the heart from each inſidious foe,
When thou, O! DEATH! thy venom'd ſword ſhalt weild,
Can ſoothe thy rage, nor ward th' impending blow.

Say, why this havoc! reſtleſs Tyrant, ſay!
Why is this earth a deſolated waſte?
When wilt thou ceaſe to make Mankind thy prey?
When will thy wide deſtructive pow'r be paſt?

We view thy conqueſts with a weeping eye;
Thy num'rous ſlaughters with compaſſion read;—
Was man, his Maker's fav'rite, born to die?
Muſt human glory as the rainbow fade?

LEARN hence, ye thoughtleſs, volatile and gay!
More gay by company and faſhion made;
Who, like the inſects of a ſummer-day,
Shine in the ſun, or flutter in the ſhade.

Learn hence, how vain the truſt on mortal ties;
The baſis of your ſanguine hopes how weak:
Slight as the web that wantons thro' the ſkies,
Which the firſt tender breeze will quickly break.

Attend the "Teacher DEATH!—his lectures hear,
Frought with theſe ſolid truths—*that man is vain—*
Ally'd to duſt—devoted to the bier—
The ſon of ſorrow—heir to woe and pain.

Life's brighteſt ſcenes, ſurvey'd in Reaſon's glaſs,
Their luſtre looſe; ſeem fleeting in the wind;
As bubbles empty; fading like the graſs,
And in their flight "leave not a *track* behind."

Nor *only hear* the Lectures DEATH conveys;
Prepare to meet him in his fierceſt form;
His arm the ſtouteſt warrior proſtrate lays,
More eaſy than we cruſh the moth or worm.

Prepar'd by penitence and pious life,
That laſt of enemies with joy we meet;
And calmly wait the iſſue of the ſtrife,
Tho' ſure to bleed beneath the victor's feet.

Prepar'd—in death the good man rapture feels,
While on Hope's anchor ſtedfaſt he relies;
With reſignation to the Conqueror yields,
Nor dreads his dart—looks upward—ſmiles and dies.

We ſee him die—we hear his angel's Lyre,
The tuneful antepaſt of future bliſs;
While the cold death-beds where the vile expire,
Are "next in horror" to the dark abyſs!

Surrounding friends who ſuch an exit view,
Think of its terrors, Death is then diſarm'd;
Wipe off their tears, diſtill'd like ev'ning dew,
And leave the good man's chamber unalarm'd.

Early eſcap'd from life's unnumber'd cares,
From all the ſtorms that drive the bark aſhore,
From Sin, from Sorrow, and deſtructive ſnares,
ORESTES landed where no tempeſts roar.

Let this one Truth exalt our thoughts on high—
That ſuch the ſolemn ordinance of heav'n,
Our comforts ſicken, and our children die,
And ſudden leave us, when but newly giv'n.

ORESTES dead—the curtains drawn around,
His weeping kindred with ſlow pace withdraw;
Where, but in Death, are ſcenes ſo mournful found?
So ſtain'd with ſorrow—ſo replete with awe?

Retir'd—in penſive ſadneſs they remain,
'Till LOVE PATERNAL breaks the ſilence deep,
And thus begins in ſoft pathetic ſtrain,—
" Ceaſe, partner of my grief; Oh! ceaſe to weep!

" True; we have loſt a pious hopeful Son,
" The pleaſing object of our mutual care;
" His race is finiſh'd, tho' not long begun;
This Heav'n thought fit—and Heav'n can never err.

Like *Iſrael's bard*, who ſaw his infant dead,
He meekly ſaid—" Why weep I now for thee?
" In vain my pray'r recalls the ſpirit fled?
" To thee I go—not thou return to me.

" Peace to his ſhade, and to his aſhes reſt!
" Let from our lips proceed no murmur faint!
" Why mourn for him who lives ſupremely bleſt,
" With Seraphs join'd, himſelf a glorious Saint!

" Sighs

" Sighs for ourſelves our loſs may juſtly plead,
" While ſwift and ſudden mortal joys depart;
" And Nature for a tear will intercede,
" To eaſe the pregnant ſorrow of the heart.

" Let drop *that* tear, and give the heart relief—
" The moiſten'd eye direct to yon abode,
" Where our ORESTES, freed from pain and grief,
" Reſts placid on the boſom of his God."

Thus gravely ſpoke the Sire—then turn'd aſide
To wipe away a cold deſcending tear;
His aged Conſort ſhed a drop ally'd—
Then for the funeral rites they both prepare.

HARK! from afar the Knell's deep-muffled ſound,
Borne through the vales by Zephyr's gentleſt breath,
Summons the mournful villagers around
T'attend ORESTES to the Houſe of DEATH.

The ſound is heard—huſh'd is the tuneful grove;
Silent the clack of yonder noiſy mill;
The ſpinner's wheel forgets awhile to move,
And buſy Labour all at once ſtands ſtill.

A tear ſteals down the furrow'd face of age;
The ſmother'd ſigh dejected matrons heave;
For comfort ſome revolve the ſacred page,
And all their pleaſure or their buſineſs leave.

Children aſtoniſh'd at the changeful ſcene,
Run round the room, or to their parents creep;
Look up and wonder what ſuch ſorrows mean,
Then liſping, aſk their mothers why they weep.

Queſtion to queſtion, ſighs to ſighs ſucceed,
Such as defy deſcription from the pen;
" He's dead "—a child replies—" not dead indeed! "
" He's dead and gone "—" but won't he come agen? "

" He's dead indeed! alas! he's gone too ſoon!
" No more his eyes will view the poor diſtreſt;
" His hand no more beſtow the ſecret boon,
" No more his tongue ſooth Miſery to reſt.

Soon as the Eve began to ſpread its ſhade,
And dimneſs drew its curtain o'er the plain,
A mingled multitude, without parade,
Swarm from their cots and join the ſolemn train.

Affections various move the mourning throng,
As Gratitude or unfeign'd feelings urge;
While ſome the notes of poignant grief prolong,
And hymn diſconſolate the *Funeral Dirge*.

FUNERAL DIRGE.

STRIKE the ſtring of ſolemn tone,
Awake the ſong of woe!
Let the mournful lengthen'd note
In melancholy flow!

Sing his praiſe, his virtues ſing!
Borne to bliſs on angel's wing:
Sing it ſolemn, grave, and ſlow,
Not with pomp, or outward ſhow!
Let the trembling lips impart
Sorrow riſing in the heart!

CHORUS OF WIDOWS AND ORPHANS.

May ſpotleſs ſpirits of the juſt
Watch o'er his tomb and guard his duſt!
Preſerve it ſafe in ſoft repoſe,
'Till th' Archangel's trumpet blows!
And then immortal may it riſe,
And mount in glory to the ſkies!
And then immortal, &c.

He's

He's gone celeſtial realms t'explore,
And dwell in endleſs reſt;
Who fed the hungry, cloth'd the poor,
And ſuccour'd the diſtreſt.

He felt the wretched's painful woe,
The widow's wants ſupply'd;
He liv'd on earth without a foe;
Without a foe he dy'd.

See! cherubs bear his ſoul on high!
See! ſaints prepare his way!
And all the tenants of the ſky
Hail him to heav'nly day.

CHORUS, &c.

May ſpotleſs ſpirits of the juſt,
Watch o'er his tomb and guard his duſt!
Preſerve it ſafe in ſoft repoſe,
'Till th' Archangel's trumpet blows!
And then immortal may it riſe,
And mount in glory to the ſkies!
And then immortal, &c.

As to the grave they paſs with progreſs ſlow,
Succeſſive groans impreſs the paſſive air;
Tears, like a torrent, ev'ry eye o'erflow,
And babes, by ſympathy, the ſorrow ſhare.

The rev'rend prieſt this ſtriking language reads:
"Man, like a flow'r, comes up, and blooms his day:
"Then, like a flow'r, is ſoon cut down, and fades,
"And ne'er continues in one ſtedfaſt ſtay.

"Here, to the ground, his body we entruſt,
"There, in ſweet reſt and ſilence to remain;
"Earth to its native earth, and duſt to duſt,
"In ſure and certain hope to riſe again."

Now to their homes repair the penſive train;
Home to their *hearts* the thoughtful few repair;
On calm reflection own this world is vain,
Though gay its pomp, and though its proſpects fair.

Wean'd be the ſoul from earth's enchanting toys,
To empty pleaſures bid a long adieu!
And pant for happineſs that never cloys,
Rich in poſſeſſion, ever full and new.

What though in fame we ſoar above the ſkies;
What if to us unnumber'd gold belong—
" Earth's higheſt ſtation ends in—*Here he lies*—
" And—*duſt to duſt*—concludes the nobleſt ſong."

EPITAPH,

IMITATED FROM GRAY.

HERE reſts his head upon the lap of earth,
A youth to Fortune, Fame, and Friendſhip known:
Fair Science ſmil'd propitious on his birth,
And meek-ey'd Virtue mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his ſoul ſincere;
Heav'n did a recompence as largely ſend:
He gave to Mis'ry much beſides a tear,
He found in Heav'n a Father and a Friend.

No farther ſeek his merits to diſcloſe,
But ſtrive his bright example to excel,
Then will your duſt, like his, in hope repoſe,
Like his, your ſouls with God in glory dwell.

FINIS.

BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY